

INTELLOFAX 7

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CONFIDENTIALCOUNTRY Balkans REPORT NO. 25X1ATOPIC Danger of War in the Balkans ?

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REMARKS

SOURCE

1. The situation in the Balkans deserves the greatest attention. The struggle between TITO and the Cominform has developed into a dangerous conflict between MOSCOW and BELGRADE. Though diplomatic relations between the two countries are continued TITO has been publicly defamed as an "enemy of the SU" and the people of Yugoslavia have been directly called upon to overthrow the TITO-regime. The last Soviet note to Yugoslavia of 18 August 1949 on the arrest of Soviet citizens was worded in such a threatening tone that the question arises as to whether there is danger of war. What does MOSCOW intend by officially declaring that the TITO-government consists of lunatic fascists and by announcing that, if necessary, it will take other and more effective measures to halt the brutal mistreatment of Soviet citizens in Yugoslavia ?
2. This threatening language by MOSCOW made TITO give in and release, on August 23, the 31 arrested Soviet citizens. The arrestees are old-time Russian emigrants, former members of the so-called White-Russian Wrangel Army who fled to Yugoslavia after the break-down of the Russian counter revolution in 1920. They had at first been stateless but became Soviet citizens, after, in the opinion of MOSCOW, they had atoned for their past sins by a loyal attitude towards the Soviet Regime. TITO accompanied the release with the declaration that Yugoslavia is an independent state which would not tolerate any interference with its internal affairs.
3. It is to be concluded that TITO will not go to the utmost and that he will not give the SU a pretext for stronger measures. On the other hand the Soviets are, in principle, not favorable to a war with its uncertain outcome. They prefer subversive activities which, in the past, gave them best results. All endeavors to overthrow TITO from within or by economic pressure have failed so far. MOSCOW is, however, finally resolved to get rid of the "TITO-Clique". Time is important. The economic aid which TITO receives from the West as a result of the treaties concluded with various countries and the dollar loan which is to be expected will increase the economic strength of Yugoslavia and the authority of TITO in his own country and make TITO still

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more self-assured. As a result overthrowing his regime will become more and more difficult.

4. With the danger of war at hand there is still the question of whether the SU herself will take action or whether she will encourage the neighbors of Yugoslavia to take the decisive steps. In the latter case it is certain that the SU would give these countries all the help compatible with her position as a non-belligerent state. In pushing Yugoslavia's neighboring states MOSCOW would start with the expectation that the war could be localized as there is always the danger of a world conflict if a great power directly interferes. The accusation, recently published by TASS, that TITO is daily provoking border incidents is an old method to create a war psychosis.
5. The recall of DAVIDKITLEV, Soviet Ambassador to BELGRADE, and his appointment as Deputy Foreign Minister also had a disquieting effect, notwithstanding the Soviet assertion that a new ambassador would soon be appointed. The fact that a personality so familiar with the Balkans was appointed deputy foreign minister of the SU is significant of the whole situation.
6. The victory of the government troops over the rebels in Greece is actually a defeat of MOSCOW which has indirectly supported the rebels via the northern neighboring states of Greece. That Yugoslavia no longer participates in this support has essentially contributed to the victory of the national (Greek) troops. The rebels now get their help chiefly from Albania, and the exceedingly threatening language by the Greek press makes the danger of war appear possible. Military action by Greece against Albania would, however, require that the USA not hinder such a measure and that Yugoslavia participate in the action. A common action by Yugoslavia and Greece against Albania would be quickly fatal to Albania. It must be doubted whether TITO would be willing to do it. The reason for his refusal would be his fear that the SU would take such a measure as an opportunity for mobilizing the neighbors of Yugoslavia against this country. A direct armed intercession of the Soviet army on the side of the Albanian army is hardly to be expected, particularly as the action might be terminated so quickly that help would come too late. Also Albania is the sole "Satellite State" without an assistance treaty with MOSCOW. On the other side, the danger of losing Albania, which would push the SU away from the Adriatic Sea and the Mediterranean, would also have the effect on MOSCOW of accelerating the "solution" of the Yugoslavian question.
7. There is no evidence that TITO approaches the Greek government. Yugoslavia has only a chargé d'affaires in ATHENS. However, the press commented that after a long time the Yugoslavia representative recently had an official conversation in the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This does not mean much. TITO keeps referring to the Greek government troops as monarcho-fascists. In a recent speech at SKOPJE, capital of Yugoslav Macedonia, his intention to establish a Greater Macedonia independent to the Balkans and for this purpose to gather the Macedonians among the Greek rebels under his own flag, might considerably hinder a political approach to Greece.
8. MOSCOW's threat to make difficulties for Yugoslavia by a Macedonian rebellion has not been carried into effect. Bulgaria was to take the lead in this rebellion, but even the Bulgarian Communist leaders seem to have followed those MOSCOW plans

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reluctantly. Whatever far-reaching preparations they may have made for this purpose, OSCEC and the Cominform do not seem inclined to run this risk. The Bulgarian Communists/the Greek rebels have also apparently objected to this plan, as it would be worse that would have to cede important and large areas to the new state of Greater Macedonia.

9. TITO has made a counter-threat against the threat of the Macedonian rebellion. In his speech at SAGPLJE, he promised Albania and Bulgaria his help if they would shake off the Cominform yoke. This is an open challenge to OSCEC. It leads to the conclusion that TITO is aware of strong political trends in these states which sprang for liberation from the OSCEC tutelage. A clever and realistic politician, TITO would hardly have spoken these weighty and dangerous words if he had not been sure of a successful reaction either at present or in the near future.
10. The first counteraction of OSCEC against this challenge may have been the reshuffling of the Bulgarian cabinet. It is true that KULAROV, whose reputation is that of a moderate man, succeeded officially to Dr. ITRKOV as after the dismissal of MOSKOV he was, the man in Bulgaria with the biggest authority among the communist leaders. His power was reduced as he was taken from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which position was given to POPKONOV who seems to be a coming man. A Macedonian by birth, Secretary-General of the National Council for the Fatherland Front and Chief Editor of the official party paper, POPKONOV is the man to have the Kremlin's confidence. OSCEC expects him to resist the allurement by TITO not to follow a political line according to the orders of the Kremlin.

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